



Daily Report

West Europe

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CONTENTS

28 March 1996

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

NATO's Solana Finds French Goals Acceptable [AFP]	1
NATO: Solana Meets With France's Chirac, Comments [EFE]	1
NATO: Estonian President Warns NATO on New USSR [Tallinn Radio]	1
NATO: Estonian President Tells NATO of Baltic Unity [Tallinn radio]	2

INTER-EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

EU: Diplomats Warn of Threats To Bosnia Elections [London THE TIMES 27 Mar]	3
EU: Incoming Mostar Administrator Discusses Goals [Madrid EL PAIS 26 Mar]	3
EU: Outgoing Administrator on Prospects for Mostar [Rotterdam NRC HANDELSBLAD 25 Mar]	4
EU: German, French Finance Ministers on Euro Currency [Hamburg BILD 27 Mar]	6
EU: France's Barnier Backs New Council Voting System [AFP]	7

AUSTRIA

Austria: Vranitzky, Schuessel Present Positions for IGC [WIENER ZEITUNG 27 Mar]	9
Austria: Vranitzky Wants Employment Target in EU Treaty [WIENER ZEITUNG 27 Mar]	10

BELGIUM

Belgium: Officials Consider Country 'On Course' for EMU [LA LIBRE BELGIQUE 26 Mar]	11
--	----

CANADA

Canada: Montreal Rejects Russian 'Mole' Report [Montreal Radio]	13
---	----

FRANCE

France: Millon on European Arms Industry, NATO [AFP]	14
France: Foreign Ministry on NATO, Turkey, Middle East [Ministry of Foreign Affairs WWW 26 Mar]	14
France: Foreign Ministry on Bosnia, Middle East [Ministry of Foreign Affairs WWW 27 Mar]	17
France: Land Forces Chief on Defense Restructuring [Luxembourg Radio]	19
France: Air France 'Hit Jackpot' at U.S. Airline Talks [LIBERATION 27 Mar]	20

ITALY

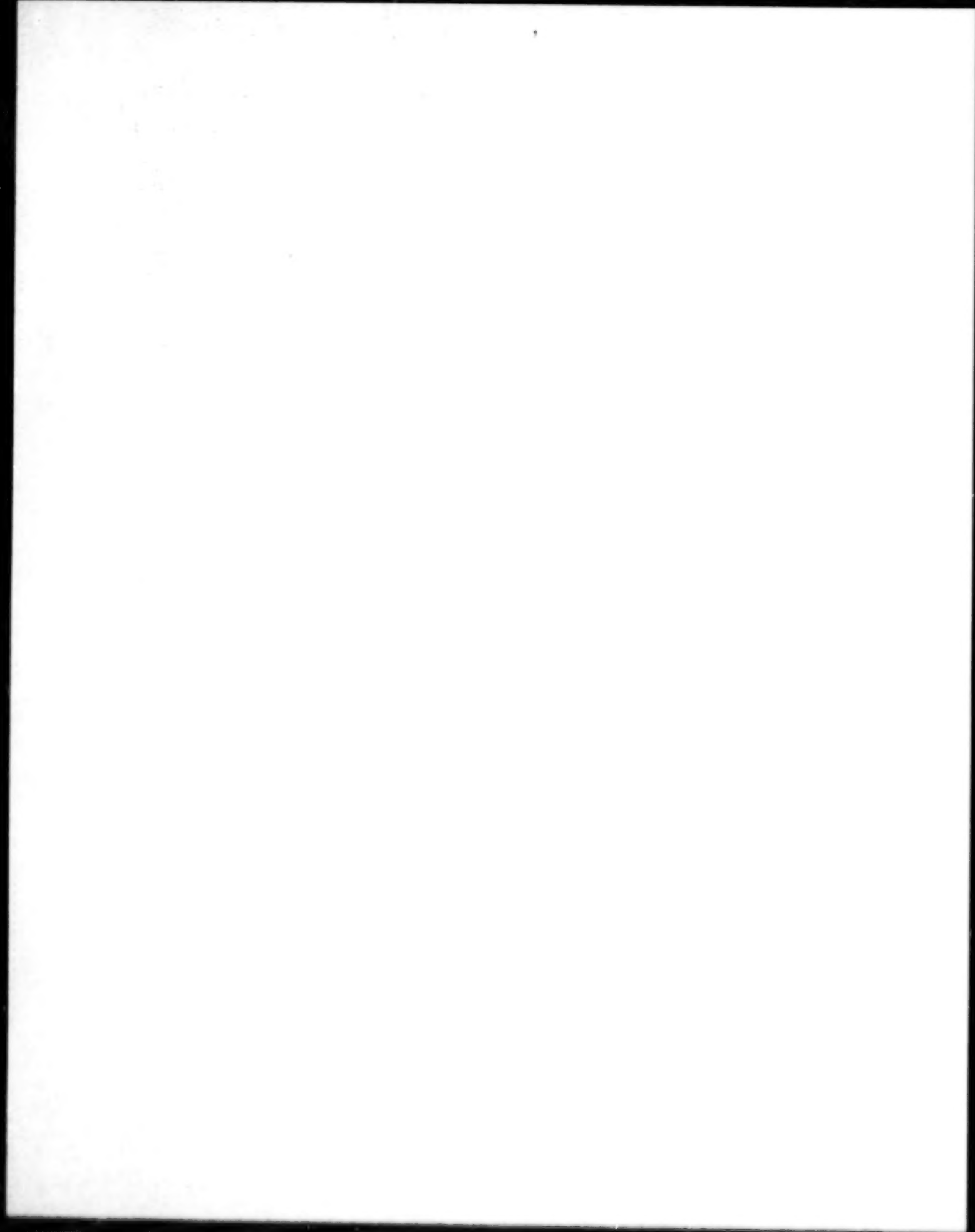
Italy: Agnelli Interviewed on Turin IOC [IL FOGLIO 28 Mar]	22
--	----

SPAIN

SPAIN: Westendorp Discusses EU Voting Structure [EL PAIS 28 Mar]	23
--	----

TURKEY

Turkey: Demirel Interviewed on Ties on Eve of U.S. Visit [Ankara TV]	24
Turkey: Yilmaz's Views on Provide Comfort Detailed [TURKISH DAILY NEWS 27 Mar]	24
Turkey: Oymen's Talks With Moscow Described [TURKISH DAILY NEWS 27 Mar]	25
Turkey: Foreign Ministry 'Cautious' on Mideast Alliance [ANATOLIA]	26
Turkey: Officials on EU, Greek Positions on Yilmaz Offer [TURKISH DAILY NEWS 27 Mar]	27
Turkey: Gonensay's Messages to Neighbors Reported [HURRIYET 23 Mar]	28
Turkey: RP Criticizes 'Anti-Religious' Measures in Army [TURKIYE 24 Mar]	28
Turkey: Defense Reacts to Interior's Remarks on Army [Ankara TV]	29
Turkey: Military Says Armed Forces 'Not Anti-Religious' [Ankara TV]	29



NATO's Solana Finds French Goals Acceptable

BR2803114396 Paris AFP in French
1627 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Paris, 27 Mar (AFP) — "The position of France is clear," NATO Secretary General Javier Solana stated after his talks with President Chirac at the Elysee on Wednesday [27 March].

"France wants to take part in the alliance and contribute to creating a European defense component within the alliance," he said before adding: "I think that we can do it. We will work on this up to the (ministerial) council in Berlin in June to give some indications of the procedure to be followed."

Questioned on the union agreement between Russia and Belarus that has been announced, Mr. Solana said that it was a "free decision" between the two countries and that "the other countries which want to join NATO should learn the lesson and be able to do so freely too."

The decision to enlarge the alliance to the East was made in 1994 on the occasion of the Brussels summit, he stressed. "We will go on. Cautiously and transparently, but we will go on."

NATO: Solana Meets With France's Chirac, Comments

BR2803134096 Madrid EFE in Spanish
1712 GMT 27 Mar 96

[Unattributed report: "Solana Says That Enlargement Process Will Continue, Although It Will Be Prudent"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Paris, 27 Mar (EFE) — [passage omitted] In statements to the press following a one-hour meeting with French President Jacques Chirac, Solana recalled that the decision to enlarge the Atlantic alliance was made in 1994, long before he took office. [passage omitted]

NATO's evolution was one of the matters discussed by the organization's secretary general and the French president, as Solana himself explained at the end of the meeting.

He added that they also broached relations with Russia and the evolution of the situation in Bosnia and of the force for the implementation of the peace agreement in Bosnia (IFOR).

Solana declared himself convinced that NATO and France will be able to work "very well" in building a European defense component in the alliance and to prepare that organization for the challenges of the next century.

"We will work until the Council (of Ministers) which will be held in Berlin" in June, at which the main guidelines which NATO should follow will be laid down.

Asked about the French stance, he said that it seemed to him "clear," following Paris' announcement that it will again form part of most of the alliance's military bodies, except for the integrated military command.

The NATO secretary general said that he does not know what will be the next stage in France's relations with the organization, and maintained that "the French stance is very important for the alliance," and that "an alliance strengthened" by its presence is also essential for Paris.

In addition, Solana declared himself satisfied with the role played by Paris in Bosnia, and maintained that without its participation, first in the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and later in the Rapid Intervention Force and the IFOR, "the situation would be even worse." [passage omitted]

NATO: Estonian President Warns NATO on New USSR

LD2703145596 Tallinn Radio Tallinn Network
in Estonian 1300 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Estonian President Lennart Meri thinks that the expansion of the European Union and NATO must not be considered separately. Over to Madis Mikko in Brussels.

[Mikko] The working day of President Lennart Meri in Brussels today began with a visit to the NATO headquarters. First he held a brief discussion with NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana. Thereafter, Meri made a 20-minute speech to the North Atlantic Council, which is made up of permanent representatives of the member states.

In his statement, Meri repeated the theses he delivered to the European Parliament [as heard] yesterday. The message to NATO, however, was somewhat more powerful than the one yesterday.

Lennart Meri emphasized that the expansion of the European Union and NATO must not be considered separately but in a clearly single context.

The subject of Russia has been present throughout the president's entire visit. Speaking at NATO headquarters, the Estonian president said that Europe, no doubt, needed Russia as a strong partner, but this must not be achieved by sacrificing other states. Here, Meri drew a parallel with relations between China and Taiwan. Because the security of the Baltic region is part of European security, one must not permit the emergence

of any gray zones at the expense of third states, Lennart Meri said.

Meri also emphasized that the key to the security of present-day Europe lay in Ukraine, I quote — If Kiev breaks, this will have very serious consequences for Europe's security — end quote. President Meri also warned NATO about the recent decision by the Russian Duma to restore the Soviet Union, I quote — A possible formation of a new Soviet Union will cost Europe very much more than the previous one — end quote.

At a brief meeting with journalists following the meeting, NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana said among other things that the expansion of NATO in groups, for example, the Visegrad states or the Baltic states separately, has not yet been decided. The preliminary plan for possible NATO expansion should be ready by December.

This is Madis Mikko from the NATO headquarters in Brussels for Estonian radio.

NATO: Estonian President Tells NATO of Baltic Unity

*LD2703152896 Tallinn Radio Tallinn Network
in Estonian 1400 GMT 27 Mar 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] The Baltic states are united in defense cooperation, Estonian President Lennart Meri

said in a speech in the NATO headquarters in Brussels today.

Cooperation between the Baltic states on defense policy is the best-functioning part of cooperation between us, Meri emphasized and added that he was not talking about a military alliance. Cooperation between the Baltic states is practical and brings results, it takes the Baltic states closer to a shared goal: a NATO membership.

Speaking about relations between Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, Meri described them as partners in competition. Meri said that the Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion was the best and most reliable example of security cooperation between the Baltic states.

Meri warned the West against reducing support to Ukraine. Meri said that after Russia, Ukraine was the second anchor of stability in Eastern Europe.

In his speech Meri said that the dream about Europe was fading because the West had failed to fully breeze in the wind of changes in the Central Europe.

EU: Diplomats Warn of Threats To Bosnia Elections

LD2703174196 London THE TIMES IN English 27 Mar 96 p14

[Report by diplomatic editor Michael Binyon: "Obstacles to Bosnia Peace Put Election Plan in Peril"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The flight of Serbs from Sarajevo suburbs, the failure so far to release all prisoners of war, and deadlock over the extradition of suspected war criminals have led Western diplomats to give a warning that, unless the ceasefire in Bosnia-Herzegovina is stabilised, the elections planned for this autumn may be postponed or scrapped.

After the Moscow meeting of the Contact Group last weekend, Carl Bildt, the EU representative in Bosnia, has said that all reconstruction aid would stop if remaining prisoners were not released very soon. His warning came as the timetable for a return to democratic politics looks increasingly unrealistic, and talks on the registration and rights of voters are in danger of breaking down.

Diplomats at the Moscow meeting emphasised their determination to hold elections for local and national assemblies and leaders in both halves of Bosnia before the September deadline set by the Dayton accords. However, so complex are the details, and so opposed are the Bosnian and Serb leaders to fulfilling conditions that would allow a free vote, that even officials from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), charged with running the elections, are beginning to doubt whether they can be held.

The main difficulties are: the complexity of the elections, which cover municipal, cantonal and national bodies; the question whether refugees should vote in their home towns or places to which they have fled; the need to guarantee freedom of movement for electoral candidates; and access by different opposition groups to state-controlled media. The OSCE is reluctant to run the polls, but if the 30 election commissions in Bosnia cannot agree on procedure, it may be forced to take over. Whitehall officials said yesterday the obstacles were enormous, but the Western powers were determined that the voting should go ahead because the entire political settlement depended on them.

The other main problem is the proliferation of parties, with more than 50 in the Bosnian Federation and 26 in Serbian Bosnia. Most are merely the vehicles for ambitious local personalities, but the OSCE insists on a threshold of 10,000 signatures before any candidate can stand at federation level. It is not easy to get access

to television or newspapers for the opposition groups, especially on the Serb side.

Suspected war criminals are forbidden to stand under the Dayton accords, but deadlock over their prosecution may make this hard to enforce. So far few countries have contributed to the estimated cost of 32.6 million pounds sterling for running the elections.

Ken Scott, the British deputy head of the OSCE mission, agrees that the obstacles are enormous and that there has been little co-operation from the parties. Given the difficulty of crossing ceasefire lines, a national election is probably impossible and candidates will have to stand in either the Serb or the Muslim-Croat entities.

If the OSCE decides the conditions for free elections do not exist, they will be postponed. If that happens, the Nato-led Implementation Force will be under strong pressure to stay because there will be no other mechanism to enforce the Dayton accords. The Americans, however, have already indicated they will not remain beyond the one-year mandate.

EU: Incoming Mostar Administrator Discusses Goals

BR2603150296 Madrid EL PAIS in Spanish 26 Mar 96 p 3

[Interview with Ricard Perez Casado, incoming EU administrator of Mostar, by Ramon Lobo in Valencia; date not given: "The Toughest Job Is Over"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Valencia — Ricard Perez Casado, 50, a Socialist, who was Valencia's mayor for almost ten years up until December 1988, is the EU's new administrator in Mostar, replacing German national Hans Koschnick, who is resigning from a post rejected by Croats and Muslims alike. Perez Casado will be responsible for organizing the complicated elections in Mostar. Thus he is returning to politics — which he left after a confrontation with the then powerful [Public Administration Minister] Joan Lerma — through the main door. He admitted that he had not slept very well for several nights. "I hardly slept at all last night," he said without ceasing to smile.

The promoters of his candidacy were Pasqual Maragall, Barcelona mayor and Committee of Regions chairman, and former Defense Minister Julian Garcia Vargas. Behind his appointment is also NATO Secretary General Javier Solana, whom he referred to as "a personal friend." [passage omitted]

[Lobo] The toughest job, the most unpopular one (dividing up the town's quarters), is done. You are now responsible for the easiest part...

[Perez Casado] Yes, the toughest job has already been accomplished. But many things still remain to be done. I do not know whether the mandate given to IFOR (multinational force to implement Dayton agreement) — EL PAIS editor's note), or our own mandate, which is parallel (and which ends in December — EL PAIS editor's note) will be enough.

[Lobo] Koschnick spoke of three years.

[Perez Casado] Yes, I read his statements the other day. We mayors always used to say, as a sort of joke, that during the first four years all you can do is draw up programs, and during the remaining four years you can get down to work and build things like our Music Palace [in Valencia]. Ha, ha. I do not believe that is our mission there. [passage omitted]

[Lobo] What can a former mayor of Valencia do for Mostar?

[Perez Casado] Perhaps experience in managing a town. A mayor's duties are very complex. He is a manager, a financial expert, and a public relations man for his town. He is an orchestra conductor. That versatility is something which is taken into account. The least difficult task is the administrative side, the most complicated is appeasing people.

[Lobo] Will a Spanish administrator promote Spanish investment? In fact, that is a very neglected aspect. We do not even have an embassy in Sarajevo. The ambassador lives in Vienna.

[Perez Casado] Our duty lies with the European Union. And, in relation to other EU partners, there are reasons for them to be grateful for the presence of 1,500 [Spanish] soldiers during three years, and the economic costs this entails, and the 15 fatal casualties we have suffered. It would not be out of place for our fellow countrymen to contribute to reconstruction, on an equal footing.

[Lobo] One of the conflicts you will be facing is the tension between Croats and Muslims. Everybody agrees that Dayton rests on the Croatian-Muslim federation, and the latter's success is largely gauged in Mostar.

[Perez Casado] I am rather concerned by this. We not only have to administer a town that is wounded, destroyed in its infrastructures, but we must also set up projects which people can consider their own. This is not what I find most daunting. What worries me is finding a way for that political agreement, which does in fact rest on the Federation, to become part of everyday normality.

[Lobo] Can economic aid help overcome the hatred, or will the latter create its own dynamics?

[Perez Casado] It may contribute to civil normality. Aid for economic reconstruction means providing people with work. People who are working tend to be less vehement.

[Lobo] Mostar has been the "little pearl" which the EU has picked, but do you believe the EU deserves it?

[Perez Casado] I would like to be very cautious here. As the EU's mandatory, I should not like to express a number of personal opinions which I may have entertained over the past four years. I believe this responsibility has been assumed to compensate for certain attitudes...which could be called lukewarm, should we say? Less energetic.

[Lobo] The European Union will be tackling an inter-governmental conference next Friday; there is talk of a two-speed EU, but everyone admits in whispers that the deadlines for the introduction of the Euro cannot be met. This looks like a Europe without any new ideas.

[Perez Casado] If no ambitious proposals are ever made, we will never make any progress. The only way to move forward is to set a course toward a goal, no matter how tough that may be.

[Lobo] But the EU's internal language does not seem adapted to the external changes: fall of the [Berlin] wall, collapse of the USSR, war in former Yugoslavia.

[Perez Casado] There is always a certain gap. It is easier to change a physical structure in a town — and I have experience in this area — than to change one's thinking and acting habits.

EU: Outgoing Administrator on Prospects for Mostar

BR2803075696 Rotterdam NRC HANDELSBLAD in Dutch 25 Mar 96 pp 1, 5

[Report on interview with Hans Koschnick, outgoing EU administrator for Mostar, by Hans Steketee in Mostar on 25 March: "European Union Must Stay in Mostar"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Mostar, 25 Mar — The European administration in Mostar will probably have to be extended by a year after 23 July to prevent new outbreaks of hatred between Muslims and Croats, says Hans Koschnick, who was appointed by the EU in 1994 to be the administrator of Mostar, in an interview with NRC HANDELSBLAD.

Today [25 March] is the last working day of Koschnick (he will be 67 next week), who was mayor of Bremen until 1985. He will be succeeded by the Spaniard Ricardo Perez Casado, the former mayor of Valencia.

The leadership of the administration in Mostar, where Muslims and Croats fought bitterly in 1993 and 1994, does not count as an enviable position. "They were not queuing up to succeed me," says Koschnick.

After nearly two years the physical recovery of the town is beginning to take shape, but scarcely any start has been made on the political and social reunification of Mostar. The Croats in particular, who live in the "cleansed" west half of the city, are resisting cooperation with the Muslims, who live in the largely devastated east part. Out of fear of violence there is little movement between the two halves of the town. Nevertheless Koschnick says he believes that cooperation and reunification will come. "I cannot force them to like one another, but cooperation is possible, if they only think that it is in their joint interest," says Koschnick. He denies that recent Croatian violence against him was connected with his departure as administrator. Croatia would bring an end to its present support to the Croats of Mostar, according to Koschnick. "Why should the EU seek to give Croatia political and economic privileges when it continues to sabotage the Muslim-Croat federation in Mostar?" he says.

"Mostar Will Be Able To Stand on Its Own Two Feet at the End of This Year"

Since 1994 Koschnick has administered the city of Mostar, divided between Muslims and Croats. Every German mark (DM) of humanitarian and economic aid is spent there fairly, he says, but reunification is still dragging. An interview with an "optimist."

In Koschnick's office in Mostar there hang pictures by the surrealist painter Magritte. But Koschnick, who has administered this town in the south of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the name of the EU since 1994, has few illusions. Herzeg-Bosna, the "independent republic of Bosnian Croats," was not recognized in the Dayton agreement, but in Mostar it is a fact," says Koschnick on the eve of his departure. "And I only have to take account of realities."

Koschnick's mission was the reunification of in total some 100,000 Muslims and Croats, who now each live in one half of the town. When he presently closes the door to his office behind him, he will not have succeeded. Elsewhere in Bosnia the two groups work together — albeit with difficulty — in a federation. Not in Mostar, where their war in 1993 and 1994 seems to have been only frozen temporarily. There is little movement between the parts of the city and the mixed police patrols are still not much more than "cosmetic," according to EU sources.

The Muslims, who live in the ruined east of the city plus a small enclave on the west bank of the Neretva, mainly listen to Sarajevo. The Croats of "Mostar-West" keep their compass turned toward Zagreb and are virtually part of the neighboring country. Phoning Split in Croatia is a long-distance call. Payment in Mostar-West takes place in Croatian kunas and in the recent elections in Croatia the 291,000 Bosnian Croats were able to vote for the Parliament in Zagreb.

"But I still remain optimistic," says the voluminous German, the former SPD [Social Democratic Party of Germany] mayor of Bremen. "After the elections in May there will be a Muslim-Croatian town council which will be able to take over most of the EU's duties. Then Mostar can carry out essential tasks like supplying energy, policing, and public transport itself. At the end of this year Mostar will be able stand on its own two feet."

In part that is wishful thinking. First it is possible that the elections will be postponed. Second Koschnick recognizes that the EU mandate "will probably have to be extended by a year" after 23 July, in order to continue to smother new outbursts of hatred. What the Croats think about the EU presence was shown on 7 February, when they attacked Koschnick. The Croats are also resisting cooperation as long as the Muslims stick to their demand that Muslims driven from West Mostar be able to return to their homes. For most Croats in West Mostar that is unacceptable, because it would give them the feeling that they had waged war for nothing.

The feasibility of Koschnick's mission is shown by the number of candidates to succeed him. "They were not queuing up," he grins.

It is to be hoped that his successor — Perez Casado, the former mayor of the Spanish town of Valencia — can take the smell of a very large number of old cigars. Because by nine o'clock in the morning a billowing curtain of smoke is already hanging in Koschnick's office in Hotel Ero. Every time he waves his hands about, or folds his big hands on his stomach, ash falls on his blue woolen jacket.

[Steketeel] In reality has not the EU only repressed symptoms in Mostar, instead of remedying the causes of the conflict?

[Koschnick] There is something in that, but still there is a general feeling that when we leave the peace will have been better kept. I cannot force them to like one another, but cooperation is possible, if they only think that it is in their joint interest.

The Dayton agreement is only about joint interests of the three parties. Those interests are: Rehabilitation

for those with a bad name, finding new friends for those who are isolated, and the reconstruction of the devastated economies. Why should the EU seek to give Croatia political and economic privileges if it continues to sabotage the federation in Mostar, or if it were to want to get East Slavonia back by force? I think that Tudjman knows that very well.

Europe also has an interest: peace in Europe. With Dayton we said: If the Balkans want something from us, then we want something from the Balkans. Zagreb, Belgrade, and Sarajevo understand that.

[Steketee] But in Mostar is it not above all a question of local forces? The Croats hate you. The mayor of Mostar-East, Safet Orucevic, resigned after you reduced the proposed joint area at Croatian request at the start of this month.

[Koschnick] Orucevic resigned because the Bosnian Government did not support him during the talks in Rome on this area. The Muslims had already agreed to a reduction. Therefore the Muslims are not the problem. The question is whether I can cooperate with the Croatian administration, which organized a riot (on 7 Feb, ed.), and a Croatian police which does not intervene when my life is threatened.

[Steketee] Few people believe in peace. They are only repairing their houses because the EU is paying their wages, they say.

[Koschnick] That is normal. The recovery started in 1994. No one received a wage. Now we are paying, especially on the Muslim side. Not too much and gradually. That supports the federation and also gets the economic cycle moving again.

[Steketee] And it helps corruption.

[Koschnick] I know for certain that on both sides, part of the EU money is disappearing into the pockets of the mafia, but I was mayor of Bremen for too long (1967 to 1985, ed.) to pretend that it is unique. Corruption is not the problem in itself, but the behavior which goes with it. Leading local crime figures were often charismatic officers in the army. And many current police officers in Mostar-West served as soldiers in the HVO (the Bosnian Croatian Army, ed.). Do you think that such officers will now arrest their old leaders and fighting buddies who are now in organized crime? The mafia is thriving on the old war.

Therefore I welcome the fact that Zagreb has sent officers who are taking part in the joint patrols. It is in Croatia's interest to bring an end to smuggling here (of cars, arms, drink, cigarettes, clothing, and food, ed.).

because they pass through Croatia and therefore the Croatian treasury has to make up the lost tax revenue.

[Steketee] The Croats are making accusations that your administration is inefficient and unfair.

[Koschnick] We have given 5,000 children a school or a creche again, so that their parents can work again, and we did not ask about their origin. Since 1994 we have renovated 4,500 houses, and restored water, gas, and electricity. Our goal was always to first help those who needed it most. They were the Muslims, because between 60 and 90 percent of their part of the town was destroyed, because the Croats had far more artillery. A 50-50 division of the money was simply unacceptable. But apart from the repair of houses, everyone has received the same.

Some DM200 million has been invested in Mostar, but not one mark of it has been spent in a way which was not as the city's inhabitants indicated themselves. Every house in East or West Mostar has been repaired precisely in accordance with their own wishes. And jealousy is normal. If we carried out a project in East Bremen, then they were angry on the other side of the town, and the other way round.

[Steketee] Many people believe that peace will stand or fall with the federation, and that the federation will stand or fall with Mostar. How can you be an optimist?

[Koschnick] I am very aware that the past will not return. But our position remains that no town can exist which was once united and is now divided in two. No one can explain why that should be so, and it is easy to solve. The three societies in Bosnia must open themselves up to one another. If they do not do that, then we will be pushed back into the 19th century.

EU: German, French Finance Ministers on Euro Currency

AU2703144796 Hamburg BILD in German
27 Mar 96 p 2

[Interview with German Finance Minister Theo Waigel and French Finance Minister Jean Arthuis by Rolf Bier; place and date not given: 'Monsieur Arthuis, Herr Waigel: How Stable Will the Euro Be?']

[FBIS Translated Text] [Bier] Both of you are finance ministers who want to replace your countries' currencies with the Euro. How do you feel about that?

[Waigel] We will make the Euro strong enough to prevent it from being at the mercy of international speculations — that is why I feel good about it. The German mark could not do this on its own in the future, it would come under pressure for revaluation. That

would impede our economic growth. In fact, part of our unemployment, which has not dropped to the level that it used to in former economic upswings, results from devaluations of the German mark.

[Arthuis] Our single market will be jeopardized, if exchange rate fluctuations continue. That problem can only be solved by a single European currency. We want to make the Euro an internationally recognized reserve currency, the counterpart of the dollar and the yen. That is important for our economy and our foreign trade.

[Bier] Will the Euro be introduced on time?

[Waigel] The schedule should not be questioned. The permanent debate on softening the criteria or postponing the introduction of the single currency have a detrimental effect on our exports and the economy.

[Arthuis] We are preparing for 1 January 1999 and expect the Euro to be introduced on schedule, because the economy needs security for planning; the single market cannot work without a common currency.

[Bier] Will France and Germany meet the Maastricht criteria?

[Waigel] I expect them to. We have not allowed any softening of the criteria during all these years, and we will not do so now. It is not for the sake of Maastricht that we want them to be adhered to, for instance with regard to the deficit quota, but for the sake of Germany and Europe.

[Arthuis] We have to tackle this goal self-confidently and ambitiously. The worst thing we could do would be to say at this point already that we will not be able to make it. It is in the interest of Europe and in France's interest. The Maastricht criteria are simply criteria of good management and common sense. Those who have excessively high debts lose their freedom and their room to act. That is the same in private households, in companies, and in governments.

[Bier] Will the interest rates go up when the Euro is introduced?

[Waigel] If we fulfill the criteria, Europe will be a community of stability. Twelve years ago, inflation in Europe was 13 percent, today it is less than 3 percent; in Germany and France it is only about 1.5 percent. In terms of the Euro, that means that interest rates will remain low.

[Arthuis] The Euro currency is based on the principle of stability, which means low interest rates. This stability pact will reassure the savers and allow them to invest their money safely and without being afraid of inflation; and their money will no longer be used for financing public deficits.

[Bier] But many people are against a Euro currency....

[Waigel] The Euro is important for the people, because it will result in economic growth and thus new jobs, which we urgently need.

[Arthuis] We need the Euro, it is important for the people, because it is an indispensable instrument for new investment, new jobs, and social solidarity in Europe and in each of the member states.

[Bier] Brussels has spent less than it had planned to — what should be done with these funds?

[Waigel] Some 4 billion German marks have been saved due to the EU agricultural reform. I think that if the EU members have been saving so determinedly, then the EU Commission will have to make cuts as well. I appeal to the Commission and to the EU heads of government that, especially during these important years leading up to the common currency, money that has not been spent should go back to the countries that raised it. That will increase approval for Europe among the citizens — especially in Germany, which is a net payer in the EU.

[Arthuis] At the moment, the EU members are making unprecedented efforts to cut their public spending. We are pleased about savings in the EU budget, but that should not induce us to spend that money immediately. I think that the EU funds that have not been spent should be used for reducing the members' future contributions. If we paid less to the EU, we could bring about our national austerity programs more quickly, which would get us a little closer to the Euro.

EU: France's Barnier Backs New Council Voting System

BR2803121396 Paris AFP in French
0540 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Paris, 28 Mar (AFP) - European Minister Michel Barnier stated on Thursday (28 March) that, in his view, a new voting system was needed in the European Council, with more qualified voting in place of the unanimity rule.

In an interview with AUJOURD'HUI on the eve of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) in Turin, the minister nonetheless admitted that there was a "difficulty with the United Kingdom, which wants to retain the unanimity voting rule for all matters."

This change is part of the reform of the institutions which, for France, must be the "first major chapter" of the Italian summit. "We cannot imagine being 20 or 27 tomorrow with the same rules as today, which were made for a Europe of six," it was said.

Following the demonstration by Europe of a "certain powerlessness in Bosnia," Mr. Barnier was hoping for "genuine progress" in the area of joint foreign policy, which "nobody has really concerned themselves with until now." In this respect he reaffirmed France's wish for Europe to give itself "a voice and a face," the absence of which "explains that we are sometimes reduced to providing after-sales service for the Americans on our own continent."

Mr. Barnier also expressed the hope that Europe would organize itself more effectively "against the great

plagues of terrorism, drugs, and large-scale crime." In this respect he noted that "some 50 percent of the heroin seized in France comes from the Netherlands."

Finally, on the subject of the revision of the Treaty of Maastricht, which is to be undertaken in Turin and which will have to be ratified in each signatory country, the minister admitted that he could not yet say whether in France this would take the form of a referendum or a parliamentary vote.

Austria: Vranitzky, Schuessel Present Positions for IGC

AU2703124996 Vienna WIENER ZEITUNG
in German 27 Mar 96 pp 1, 2

[Unattributed report: "Positions on Intergovernmental Conference"]

[FBIS Translated Text] At a news conference yesterday, Chancellor Franz Vranitzky and Vice Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel presented the joint guidelines for the EU Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), starting in Turin on Friday [29 March]. The basic positions were adopted by the cabinet yesterday after a short assessment procedure and after incorporating the views of the provinces and social partners.

Both Vranitzky and Schuessel stressed that, with the positions that have been drafted, Austria can assume the "function of an engine" at the IGC.

An intermediate report is to be submitted during the session of the EU Council in Florence in June. However, Schuessel emphasized that the discussions will probably last 12 to 15 months.

Vranitzky welcomed the fact that not only formal legal matters and institutional questions will be discussed at the IGC but also specific major issues. Austria wants to ensure that major goals for a common employment policy are stipulated in the EU treaty.

A control mechanism is required "as to how the individual member states handle the decisions that are adopted jointly."

The social agreement must also be included in the EU treaty, as well as environmental protection. Here it is important for Vranitzky that both sustained development and the need for examinations concerning environmental compatibility are enshrined in the treaty.

Schuessel pointed out that the EU must draft a common component for defense and security policy.

The foreign minister does not believe that the EU and Western European Union will merge at this IGC. A more far-reaching interlinking is quite realistic. Basically, it is important for Austria that the role of small EU countries is not curbed. Schuessel stated: Thus, every EU member must have a seat and a vote in the Commission. The disproportionate representation of the small EU states in the European Parliament and the Council must also be maintained.

Austria will advocate "more transparency, more subsidiarity, and more federalism" concerning the EU decisions. The EU must be prepared for a successful expansion.

mon. However, only a few of the 10 would-be members will be accepted during the first stage.

Austria wants to provide decisive impulses for the EU to become "more efficient, more transparent and to improve the decisionmaking process." Vranitzky made it clear that the national responsibility of the individual governments will also be maintained in the case of European initiatives — in employment policy, environmental policy, and the sphere of traffic, for example.

Schuessel spoke of creative and innovative Austrian positions in individual areas. He supported majority decisions in the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), for instance.

However, Vranitzky and Schuessel stressed that unanimity should be required on central topics and sensitive issues. In CFSP, where weaknesses have occurred occasionally so far, a transition toward "gradual majority decisions" should be ensured. Vranitzky and Schuessel emphasized the need for cooperation among the EU Council and Commission, and suggested that the EU troika play a larger role in foreign policy.

In spite of the controversial positions on the peaceful use of nuclear energy in the individual EU countries, Austria wants to continue to advocate its abandonment. Vranitzky announced that Austria will launch an information campaign designed to explain the opportunities and possibilities resulting from EU membership to the population. After all, the reduction of the prices of some foodstuffs was not the reason why Austria joined the EU. What is important is "participation in shaping a community on a lasting basis."

Schuessel announced that after the start of the IGC in Turin, the foreign ministers will meet regularly every month. As far as Austria is concerned, it was agreed that the Main Committee of the Nationalrat and the Bundesrat should be informed on a regular basis. In addition, regular consultations with the legislators of the EU countries will take place.

On behalf of Austria, Chancellor Franz Vranitzky, Vice Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel, and State Secretaries Benita Ferrero-Waldner and Karl Schloegl will attend the Turin conference. As a "special gesture toward the provinces," Vorarlberg Governor Martin Putacher will travel to Turin.

Women's Affairs Minister Helga Konrad yesterday confirmed Austria's willingness to increase its efforts to ensure equal treatment for men and women. A corresponding passage will be included in the Austrian positions on the IGC. In view of the existing inequalities between men and women, it should be stipulated in

the EU treaty that member states can take measures ensuring preferential treatment for women, Konrad stated.

Joerg Haider, leader of the Freedom Party of Austria (FPOe), presented the ideas of his party on the reform of the EU. He strongly criticized the government's positions because they were adopted without the participation of parliament. Haider vehemently rejected the softening of the principle of unanimity. He views himself as the "counsel for the Austrian interests against the Austrian Government." Prior to the 1994 referendum, the coalition described the principle of unanimity as essential for being able to stand its ground vis-a-vis the large EU states.

Instead of a central state, the FPOe wants a confederation of sovereign states. Thus, important decisions would remain within the competence of national parliaments. The European Parliament should act as a control instrument. The Commission which "actually plays government" should be abolished, and the executive board should be vested with more power, the FPOe demands.

The Economic and Monetary Union should only be implemented if all states participate, Haider stressed.

Hubert Pirkerer, security expert of the Austrian People's Party, hopes that the IGC will lead to more security. Regulations concerning the fight against drug-related crime, organized crime, and misuse of visas should be adopted.

Austria: Vranitzky Wants Employment Target in EU Treaty

AU2703130796 Vienna WIENER ZEITUNG
in German 27 Mar 96 pp 1,8

[Report by "bpm": "Vranitzky Wants To Contribute Austrian Position in Torino"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A target for full employment should be included in the EU Treaty. This is a wish that Austria will present at the EU government conference, which will begin in Torino on 27 March, Chancellor Franz Vranitzky stated at an event organized by the Bawag Bank on the topic of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU).

The observance of a European employment policy should, however, be monitored by a "control mechanism" because, of course, everyone is in favor of full

employment, but measures to implement it are often missing, Vranitzky stated.

In addition, the social agreement of the Maastricht Treaty should be included the new EU Treaty to avoid distortions of competition through social dumping. All 15 EU countries should commit themselves to observing the social agreement, Vranitzky said.

At the conference in Torino, the Social Democrats intend to advocate ensuring jobs within the framework of the EMU. The goal of the EMU cannot be the establishment of a stable currency for just a few but must be the establishment of a social system for as many as possible, Vranitzky stated on 25 March. The EMU has a chance only if it is linked with the goal of safeguarding employment.

The chancellor said that the Maastricht criteria are "sensible." However, the formulation in the Maastricht Treaty does not demand strict fulfillment of the above-mentioned criteria but only approaches to the limits. In addition, the values set down in the past were just reflections of the situation at that time. Three years ago Austria still fulfilled the criteria, just as many other EU countries. Nevertheless, Vranitzky came out against changing the criteria.

The chancellor rejected a stability pact as proposed by German Finance Minister Theo Waigel. In this connection, Vranitzky spoke of a "penal tax" for those countries that did not achieve the 3-percent limit for new debts measured by the GDP.

"The EMU will work only if the largest possible number of EU countries can join it," the chancellor stressed and called for fulfilling the Maastricht criteria as envisaged by the treaty. An EMU with Austria but without Italy, Austria's second largest trading partner, will only bring disadvantages in the long run.

Prudent monetary policy and fiscal policy coordination must ensure sensible dealing with regional economic shocks in the EMU for the future. If the unemployment rate of one country is, for instance, higher than the EU average or the growth lags behind EU average, the EU should establish a stability reserve to compensate, the chancellor demanded.

Furthermore, the EU should have the opportunity to raise loans via Euro bonds, Vranitzky said.

Belgium: Officials Consider Country 'On Course' for EMU

BR2703150696 Brussels LA LIBRE BELGIQUE
in French 26 Mar 96 pp 1, 13

[Article signed "Y.C.": "The Belgian Franc Prepared for the Euro"]

[FBIS Translated Text] On Monday [25 March] Fons Verplaetse, the governor of the National Bank, invited Belgian financial circles to listen to him and his guests Jean-Luc Dehaene and Philippe Maystadt present Belgium's economic record. Without openly admitting it, the meeting's central theme was Belgium's "credibility" as a candidate for EMU.

Will Belgium join the euro system from 1 January 1999? Well it is in a position to meet the Maastricht criteria, in any event. The budget deficit must not exceed 3 percent of GDP. That will be achieved in 1996 already, and Fons Verplaetse even advocates setting a target of 2.75 percent (at the cost of an extra 20 billion Belgian francs [BFR] from the budget), despite the weak 1.6 percent growth. It is all a question of "credibility."

As to the national debt, this remains at 134 percent of GDP when it must be down to 60 percent in order to meet the Union criteria. "It is the trend which counts," the three speakers repeated, affirming that such a trend is well and truly under way. "This is the direction you must be moving in," explained the finance minister, who pointed out that the Maastricht Treaty permitted such an interpretation.

Fons Verplaetse also made the most of the opportunity in order to dispel the specter of a recession. Belgium "has been through a period of economic slowdown."

All the Ingredients Are Present: Belgium On Course for EMU

Several hundred institutional investors were invited to attend a major seminar on Monday morning, in the auditorium of the National Bank, on "Belgian financial markets." Fons Verplaetse was seeking to give Belgium's financial community the chance to come and take the pulse of the nation's economy for themselves. The diagnosis was delivered by those in closest attendance to the economy: Jean-Luc Dehaene and Philippe Maystadt clearly traced the progress made over recent years, while not forgetting to shed the spotlight on the challenges ahead.

Satisfactory Trend

"All the ingredients are present," was the message from Fons Verplaetse, immediately invoking Belgium's participation in EMU. This served as an introduction to the

speech by Jean-Luc Dehaene who pointed out the main lines of his economic policy in a climate of moderate growth. Despite a certain confusion, Belgium has nevertheless chalked up five plus-points: low inflation, increasing company profits, low interest rates, and a "comfortable" current account balance of payments surplus. As a final point, the prime minister declared "with a certain pride that 1996 will be a special year for Belgium: for the first time since the early 1970's, my country's budget deficit will be down to 3 percent." An event which Fons Verplaetse applauds all the more fervently as it is one of the convergence criteria laid down by the Maastricht Treaty.

Philippe Maystadt stressed that developments in the direction of achieving a national debt of 60 percent of GDP (another convergence criteria) showed a "satisfactory" trend (despite the present debt of 134 percent) for meeting the terms of Maastricht. To do so, the Belgian Government will maintain, until 1999, a "primary balance" (surplus of government finances less interest charges) of 6 percent, the finance minister affirmed.

However, Jean-Luc Dehaene admits that "what is lacking today is renewed consumer confidence." He also pointed out that three wage constraint agreements end this year. The prime minister hopes to be able to replace these with his "pact on employment for the future" which should make it possible to reduce unemployment by one half by the beginning of the next century.

In 1999 or in 20 Years

Fons Verplaetse has never been short for words. And EMU is a subject particularly close to his heart. "If we do not achieve EMU in 1999, we will have to wait 20 years before we get another opportunity like this."

As to whether Belgium really has every chance of joining: "Some people never ask any questions on this subject, but others would first like to put the Belgian franc to the test. Well let them go ahead and do it! They will lose money."

Is Fons Verplaetse really independent or is he involved in the strategic decisions? "I can invite you to lunch to discuss the issue today. But let the others decide."

Why does he make so frequent allusions to the uncompromising positions adopted by Great Britain? "Because there will always be 42 kilometers of water between them and us. And I have never taken the channel tunnel."

But the British are right on one point. "They criticize the future European central bank for not having provided for the equivalent of our board of governors. I also believe

that it is a very useful body which provides us with a weekly contact with reality."

Belgium's economic performances are satisfactory: "I say that there is no recession and the first quarter of 1996 will not be any weaker than the last quarter of 1995." Fons Verplaetse does not consider that the Belgian economy has experienced a recession but simply an economic slowdown.

But even if the economic parameters are favorable, the same does not apply to employment: "I do not believe there is any purely economic solution to unemployment. It is primarily a question of confidence."

Canada: Montreal Rejects Russian 'Mole' Report
*LD2703154296 Montreal Radio Canada International
in English 1430 GMT 27 Mar 96*

[Passages in quotation marks are recorded]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Announcer] The Canadian Government is rejecting a report that a Russian spy has been operating inside the Canadian spy agency CSIS (Canadian Security Intelligence Service). Val Meredith of the opposition Reform Party in the House of Commons says a mole has worked in the Canadian Security Intelligence Service for nearly 20 years. Mrs. Meredith says she has an extremely detailed secret account of the alleged spy's activities. She says the government hasn't done anything about it and has threatened to release her information.

Solicitor General Herb Gray says the government has already looked into the matter and says the allegations aren't new and aren't true. Connie Watson reports from Ottawa.

[Meredith, speaking in parliament] "Is the solicitor general personally convinced that there is not a Russian spy operating within CSIS?"

[Watson] Val Meredith's questions didn't shock Solicitor General Herb Gray. Allegations came to light about a month ago of a man who may have been acting as a double agent for the past 20 years. Meredith says she has more. She wants Gray to look at her documents and she is giving him until tomorrow to give her some answers — or else.

[Meredith] "I feel that this is important enough that I am prepared to make it public."

[Watson] Gray doesn't appreciate the threat.

[Gray] "I don't think she can impose any artificial deadlines. I'll review her letter and any other material, but if she goes ahead and releases it, she has to take full responsibility for what she does."

[Watson] Gray says the intelligence service and its watchdog agency have already looked into this and found nothing and that's good enough for him. Meredith says Gray is being misled.

[Meredith] "This is something they have known about for a number of years and it's time that the government did something to protect Canadians."

[Watson] As to what a Russian mole would be doing in Canada now that the Cold War is over, Meredith says there is plenty to keep him busy. She claims this man may be passing on economic, military, and technological intelligence to the Russian Government.

This is Connie Watson, CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) News, Ottawa.

[Announcer] Television news for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation reports that the alleged mole that Mrs. Meredith is referring to is a translator who worked for CSIS. The report says he had financial and other problems which led to his departure from the agency two months ago. CBC TV News says its sources claim he had no links with the KGB Soviet spy agency or any other Russian intelligence group.

France: Millon on European Arms Industry, NATO
BR2803133696 Paris AFP in French
1646 GMT 27 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Paris, 27 Mar (AFP) — Defense Minister Charles Millon said on Wednesday (27 March) that the "European arms industry will come about through the definition of European strategic imperatives."

Mr. Millon was speaking at the opening of the international colloquium entitled "What defense for France in the post Cold War?" organized by the Rally for the Republic (RPR) deputy for Val d'Oise Department Pierre Lellouche and held at the National Military Academy.

The minister stated that "this European preference" which must be determined "jointly" in the strategic sectors for which Europe intends maintaining its "technological skill and industrial capability," is a "question of survival" for Europe.

Mentioning France's idea of renewing the Atlantic Alliance, he repeated that this renovation must "make it possible to establish a European defense identity in NATO."

He added: "An ambitious European defense policy cannot be dissociated from a clear policy with regard to NATO. On the other hand, the renewal of NATO, to have any real meaning, must lead to the creation of a real European pillar."

Mr. Millon has "high hopes" that the "fundamental change" to NATO, with the agreement for the establishment of the concept of the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) could be confirmed at NATO's ministerial meeting to be held in Berlin in June.

The CJTF born out of the NATO, European, and national military corps could make it possible to use NATO's logistic resources for European operations to which the United States might not want to or could not participate in.

This subject of the "European defense identity" received the support of Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger who was invited to the colloquium. He said that he remained "a fervent supporter of the European identity, even in the nuclear domain."

In his opinion, "the fact that Europe has the bomb only serves to strengthen" the Atlantic alliance.

France: Foreign Ministry on NATO, Turkey, Middle East

BR2709152596 (Internet) French Ministry of Foreign Affairs WWW in French 26 Mar 96

[Daily press briefing by Foreign Ministry Spokesman Jacques Rummelhardt to unidentified journalists at the Foreign Ministry in Paris on 26 March]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt]

France-NATO

[Rummelhardt] Mr. Javier Solana is to visit Paris tomorrow. Mr. Solana has been secretary general of the Alliance since December. This will be his first visit in his new capacity. During his time as Spanish foreign minister Mr. Solana enjoyed excellent relations with the French authorities. He is a man who commands much respect in Paris.

He will be arriving at around noon tomorrow.

The purpose of this visit is to permit an in-depth and open exchange of views on a number of issues of concern to the Atlantic Alliance.

In the perspective of the renewal of the Alliance and following on from the decisions announced to the Atlantic Council by Mr. de Charette in Brussels on 5 December, the French authorities and Mr. Solana will look into the preparatory work being done for the ministerial session of Council which will meet in Berlin on 3 June. France has high hopes of this 3 June meeting which is to lay down the main guidelines for adapting the Alliance structures, with a view to adopting decisions on this subject at the ministerial session of the Council in December 1996.

Therefore, the June meeting will set out the main guidelines which will then be ratified in December. Mr. Solana's visit should help pave the way for defining these guidelines which will emerge in Berlin in June.

There are five stages. First of all, back in January 1994 a summit meeting was held and the decision was made to overhaul the Alliance so that it can face up to a direct military threat against the countries of central and Eastern Europe. Second, in December 1995 France announced a series of decisions tending toward its participation in the modernization of the Alliance. Tomorrow Mr. Solana is to visit Paris. Fourth, in Berlin in June the ministerial Council will draw up the guidelines for the decisions and these will finally be adopted at the fifth stage, the ministerial meeting in December.

[Journalist] Is not France the only country to want this reform of the Alliance?

[Rummelhardt] No, because since January 1994 the whole Alliance has accepted the obvious conclusion that it should be modernized and adapt to a new reality.

[Journalist] So why do you consider Mr. Solana's visit to Paris to be the third stage?

[Rummelhardt] It is one stage over a period of time because it will be a unique opportunity for us to speak with Mr. Solana. This is one stage for us.

[Journalist] Will France take another step at the Berlin meeting toward full participation in NATO's integrated structure?

[Rummelhardt] France intends participating fully in the modernization and adaptation of the Alliance. I cannot be more specific since the guidelines for this will only be set out in June and the decisions will not be made before December.

[Journalist] Does France intend rejoining the integrated command structure? Is that what we are moving toward or is it premature to speak of this?

[Rummelhardt] The direction we are moving in is toward an Atlantic Alliance adapted to performing its tasks. The Atlantic Alliance we want to maintain and develop is one that will be enlarged and in which a European defense identity will emerge.

[Journalist] Or rather a second pillar?

[Rummelhardt] We will push more for the emergence of a European defense identity.

[Journalist] But in the Alliance?

[Rummelhardt] Yes, in the Alliance.

[Journalist] So it will be a second pillar of the Alliance?

[Rummelhardt] We will push for the emergence of a European defense identity.

[Journalist] Does that imply strengthening the WEU?

[Rummelhardt] Discussions are underway.

[Journalist] Is this European defense identity of more concern to the WEU or to Eurocorps?

[Rummelhardt] All of that is currently under discussion but no conclusions have yet been reached since the guidelines will only be set out in June and the final decisions made in December.

[Journalist] Will the minister be making any firm proposals when he meets with Mr. Solana?

[Rummelhardt] He will be talking with Mr. Solana.

Schengen Accord

[Journalist] The French decision announced yesterday includes the lifting of French-German and French-Spanish border controls. However, it was also stated that there will be mobile checks at these borders...

[Rummelhardt] Yes, that is right. There will still be checks.

[Journalist] But there always were mobile checks...

[Rummelhardt] Yes. What we have done is to remove the mechanisms that were put in place in June 1995.

[Journalist] So what has changed?

[Rummelhardt] What we suspended in the application of the Schengen Agreement were the provisions concerning land border controls. That is what we lifted again for Spain and Germany.

[Journalist] So now that this suspension has been lifted, these checks have disappeared?

[Rummelhardt] For Germany and Spain, yes. This decision will take effect as of 18 April. The suspension remains in force on the Belgian and Luxembourg borders.

[Journalist] So it is only a partial decision?

[Rummelhardt] The decision announced yesterday only concerns Germany and Spain. Nothing has changed with regard to Belgium and Luxembourg.

[Journalist] So this decision is reinforcing the "blockade" on the Netherlands?

[Rummelhardt] There is no "blockade." I think that in France, as in the other EU countries including in the Netherlands itself, there is a desire to combat drugs trafficking. We must make progress in the fight against drugs trafficking that all EU nations subscribed to, in particular at the European summit meeting in Madrid last December.

[Journalist] So why is France the only country talking about it?

[Rummelhardt] France is not the only country talking about it.

[Journalist] Why has Spain not adopted the same measures as France?

[Rummelhardt] Spain does not have borders with the Benelux countries.

[Journalist] OK, so why has Germany not adopted such measures?

[Rummelhardt] There have been German statements demanding a tougher crack down on drugs trafficking.

[Journalist] But why be so tough on the Netherlands? Why does France propose changing Dutch law?

[Rummelhardt] I repeat: France does not decide what is Dutch law. Dutch law belongs to the Dutch. Dutch law is decided by the Dutch. It is the responsibility of the Dutch. However, all the EU member states have the shared responsibility to combat drugs trafficking.

[Journalist] So you think that the fight against drugs trafficking is incompatible with a Dutch policy that you find too permissive?

[Rummelhardt] It is a domestic Dutch problem. It is the Netherlands' responsibility to ensure that drugs trafficking does not develop beyond its borders.

[Journalist] But tell me clearly: Do you think that the Netherlands' policy is compatible with the fight against drugs trafficking?

[Rummelhardt] It is not the French who change Dutch laws. It is the Dutch themselves who will do that, possibly to fall in line with their international commitments.

[Journalist] Is there not a Union directive on this question of soft drugs consumption?

[Rummelhardt] No.

[Journalist] Why not?

[Rummelhardt] The fight against drugs is not covered by the Treaty of Rome, it is simply a question of cooperation between countries.

EU-Turkey

[Journalist] Why did the planned meeting with the Turks not go ahead?

[Rummelhardt] The EU-Turkey association Council did not meet. The presidency decided to postpone the meeting of the Council.

France's position is clear: The 15 EU member states signed an agreement with Turkey. An agreement on the customs union has been in effect since 1 January. This agreement also provides for financial cooperation and this financial cooperation agreement must also be respected by all 15 member states.

Of course there are differences between the Greeks and the Turks. That is another matter. These differences can be overcome. There is a way of doing that and it is called dialogue. Dialogue between Greece and Turkey which can be assisted by the EU, respecting international law and treaties, and without recourse to force and threats.

We have noted Athens' declarations to Ankara. They are a step in the right direction. They now have to be given some substance.

[Journalist] So why was the meeting postponed?

[Rummelhardt] The presidency asked to put it off. You will have to ask the presidency.

[Journalist] Was it a French initiative?

[Rummelhardt] Not to my knowledge.

[Journalist] But you say the EU can help with this dialogue. What is being proposed?

[Rummelhardt] We believe their differences can be resolved through dialogue, respecting international law and the treaties, and without recourse to force and threats.

[Journalist] Yes, but what is the actual help you propose giving?

[Rummelhardt] I have told you what this aid consists of: We hope and we want the differences between Greece and Turkey to be resolved through dialogue between Greece and Turkey, respecting international law and the treaties, and without recourse to force and threats.

[Journalist] Is the International Court of Justice competent in this matter? Your statement does not mention it.

[Rummelhardt] What is needed is dialogue, respecting international law and the treaties. It is not up to the states to decide what is the law, but the court can.

[Journalist] Where should the association council have met?

[Rummelhardt] Brussels.

Middle East

[Journalist] A follow-up meeting on the Sharm al-Shaykh summit is due to be held in Washington this week. Is the French request that the agenda be changed a precursor to French participation? Has the United States replied to your demands? Has it replied to your question on co-chairmanship by the EU?

[Rummelhardt] You have to look closely at the spirit of this meeting. It is a goodwill meeting, not some kind of hard bargaining exercise. All parties are meeting for joint action. Therefore, when we meet we will all try to take into account what the others are saying. We have stressed some things, other people have stressed other things. We will see how things turn out on Thursday and Friday (28-29 March).

[Journalist] Nevertheless, France and the United States do differ considerably in their views of the agenda...

[Rummelhardt] People draft agendas and they can then be modified. The meeting organizer produces the agenda, but then asks the other participants if they agree with it. That is when you can start to change it.

[Journalist] Has any joint Europe-Arab action been worked out for this?

[Rummelhardt] I think so, and I certainly hope so. In a statement he made yesterday, my American counterpart Mr. Burns said: "Several countries have made requests concerning the agenda and we are looking into these requests." There is nothing to get upset about. The aim remains the success of the peace process.

[Journalist] Why is it the United States that is looking into the requests concerning the agenda?

[Rummelhardt] Because the meeting will take place in Washington and somebody has to draft an agenda, as for any meeting.

[Journalist] Have the Americans replied to the question of a co-chairmanship?

[Rummelhardt] Not as far as I know, but of course there is the time difference.

[Journalist] What more can you tell us about the visit of the Troika to the Middle East? When will this take place?

[Rummelhardt] It has not yet taken place because, as I have said before, there are timetabling problems on both sides, problems of availability of the ministers and members of the Troika governments, and similar problems for the people they want to meet.

[Journalist] Can you confirm that the Troika will not be going to Damascus?

[Rummelhardt] I have not heard anything about that. I have heard about the countries in the region.

[Journalist] So is the list of countries to be visited known?

[Rummelhardt] No, or at least it has not been made public. However, the Troika could make a number of trips, not necessarily one tour. It is a practical question of availability and timetables. [passage omitted]

Rarotonga Treaty

[Journalist] France has signed the three protocols of the treaty of Rarotonga. What will be the situation concerning the transiting of French nuclear-powered vessels or nuclear arms-carrying vessels through the zone concerned by the treaty?

[Rummelhardt] The Rarotonga Treaty does not affect the rights of transit of such vessels in international

waters. You must not confuse this treaty with the Bangkok Treaty which prohibits such transit in the economic area. There is no mention of that in the Rarotonga Treaty.

Chechnya

[Journalist] Mr. Grigorians, who is seeking to convene an international war crimes tribunal for Chechnya will today meet with Mr. Poudade, the French Foreign Ministry's Continental Europe director. He is asking for French assistance. What will you tell him?

[Rummelhardt] I cannot stop Mr. Grigorians from meeting with Mr. Poudade. Anything we have to say to Mr. Grigorians we will say through Mr. Poudade.

Where Chechnya is concerned, I would refer you to the statement that the EU published yesterday, the text of which I can give you.

France: Foreign Ministry on Bosnia, Middle East

BR280/122496 (Internet) French Ministry of Foreign Affairs WWW in French 27 Mar 96

[Daily press briefing by Foreign Ministry Spokesman Jacques Rummelhardt to unidentified journalists at the Foreign Ministry in Paris on 27 March]

[FBIS Translated Text]

Former Yugoslavia

[Journalist] It seems that some foreign combatants are still present in Bosnia. Do you have any comment on this?

[Rummelhardt] No, I do not have any specific comment. We want the peace agreements to be implemented which provide for the withdrawal of foreign combatants from Bosnia within a one-month period following the implementation of the accords. If there are still foreign combatants they must leave Bosnia.

[Journalist] Even if they acquired the Bosnian nationality by marrying?

[Rummelhardt] We want foreign combatants to leave. We demand the implementation of the agreements.

[Journalist] Do you not warn the Bosnian authorities of a reduction in economic assistance?

[Rummelhardt] We want to help the Bosnians. That is what we are doing. Up to now, the bulk of assistance to the Bosnians has been provided by the European Union.

[Journalist] The United States wants to rearm the Bosnians. Is it not contrary to the peace agreements?

[Rummelhardt] From a military standpoint, we want an equilibrium, a lowest-common-denominator equilibrium. We maintain that if there is money to help the Bosnians, it should be used for reconstruction and not destruction.

[Journalist] Would rearming the Bosnians not be contrary to the peace agreements?

[Rummelhardt] It is a political choice: Money can either be spent to buy cannons, or to build schools and hospitals. We prefer to build schools and hospitals.

[Journalist] However, the Americans want to rearm the Bosnians. Is this compatible with the peace agreements?

[Rummelhardt] If money is available, should it be used for armaments? We do not think that this is an appropriate option. Seventy-five percent of the Bosnian population are benefitting from international humanitarian aid, which shows that the country is devastated, ravaged, that it must be reconstructed. Consequently, if financial means are available, they must be earmarked — this is what we think — for the reconstruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

France-Kuwait

[Journalist] Can you confirm the press information which says that France is putting pressure on Kuwait for it to buy the French sea-to-sea missiles?

[Rummelhardt] No, I cannot comment on it. I will not vouch for the expression "putting pressure." Negotiations for the purchase of armament by Kuwait are under way. The French products are the best. We hope that Kuwait will buy the best products.

Middle East

[Journalist] A Foreign Ministry official said that there was a considerable divergence between the United States and France on the follow-up meeting to the Sharm-al-Shaykh summit. Can you confirm this information?

[Rummelhardt] I think that you are referring to an article published in LIBERATION. It appears that there was a draft agenda, that we did not — and still do not — think that this draft agenda was well-balanced, and we want it to be well-balanced. Discussion is under way to revise the agenda. As I told you yesterday, it is only normal that those who host a meeting should propose an agenda. The other participants are reaching a decision on this proposal. That is what is happening now. In Washington tomorrow there will be a coordination meeting before the discussions begin to see how an agenda which suits all the participants can be drafted.

[Journalist] At what level will this meeting take place?

[Rummelhardt] At the level of civil servants.

[Journalist] What are the issues still pending?

[Rummelhardt] I will not go into details. Before each meeting some participants want to raise some issues, others want to discuss other issues... We will know more about it tomorrow.

For us, the Sharm-al-Shaykh meeting was a meeting aimed at consolidating and relaunching the peace process. The aim purpose of terrorism is to break the dynamic of peace in the region. That is why terrorism must not be given a chance to achieve its objective. The peace process must be consolidated and relaunching.

[Journalist] Will there be a preliminary meeting on this topic?

[Rummelhardt] Yes, there will be some informal meeting. The officials will meet before the opening of the meeting to know what agenda will be followed and then, when the meeting starts, the chairman of the meeting — in this case the U.S. President — will say: OK, I propose this agenda. Do you have anything to add? Would you like to modify such or such a point?

[Journalist] What about EU copresidency?

[Rummelhardt] This question is still pending.

[Journalist] Do you mean it has not been settled?

[Rummelhardt] Discussions are going on.

[Journalist] Can you confirm that Yasir 'Arafat threatened not to attend this meeting?

[Rummelhardt] He is not supposed to attend it anyway since it will take place at the level of the civil servants.

[Journalist] Did Mr. 'Arafat tell you about his concerns?

[Rummelhardt] We are in permanent contact with all our partners, with all the Sharm-al-Shaykh attendees.

[Journalist] Could the next follow-up meeting be held in France?

[Rummelhardt] Two follow-up meetings are scheduled. The first is to be held this month in Washington at the civil-servant level and the second one will be held at ministerial level. However, the place and the date have not yet been agreed. It should be some time in April but it has not been decided. Nor the place.

[Journalist] Would you like it to be held in Paris?

[Rummelhardt] Yes, absolutely. We are ready to host this meeting.

China

[Journalist] What is the position of France on the Geneva discussions on human rights in China?

[Rummelhardt] France is showing full solidarity with its EU partners. The talks among the Europeans are going on. I think that they should yield some result by the time the European Council meets in Tava.

[Journalist] Would you like to see a resolution condemning the human rights violations in China?

[Rummelhardt] We want a joint EU position.

[Journalist] Is it not a case of double standards? Can you condemn the human rights violations by China without condemning those by Israel?

[Rummelhardt] It is not a question of double standards. There is a constant French position.

[Journalist] Which is?

[Rummelhardt] Denouncing human rights violations and work for respect for them.

France: Land Forces Chief on Defense Restructuring

LD2703214396 Luxembourg RTL Radio Network in French 0645 GMT 27 Mar 96

[Interview with French General Monchal, chief of General Staff of the French Land Forces, by correspondent Michelle Cotta on 27 March; place not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Cotta] Good morning. Today, an important seminar of the general staff of the land forces is being held in Chantilly in the framework of the defense restructuring announced by the government. Today, also, an inter-ministerial delegate for the restructuring of the defense will be appointed at a cabinet meeting. So, how are you going to tackle the problem of the land forces' dimension — with concern, anxiety, or calm?

[Monchal] Calmly, of course. I have already said it: there is no tension in the army at present. There are many questions, and indeed, this seminar, which you have mentioned, aims to respond to some of these questions.

[Cotta] However, following the decision to make the army professional, taken by the president on 22 February, 43 regiments are destined to be disbanded between now and the year 2002. How will you select these regiments?

[Monchal] Well, we are going to bring into play a certain number of criteria for that. The first criteria will be the human dimension. It will be necessary to manage

these transitions in the most humane way possible. Afterward, of course, we will take as criteria the cost-effectiveness, and the minister will, according to all that, add the political criteria to make the relevant choices.

[Cotta] You have already done away with many regiments in the years that you have been the head of the land forces. What exactly happens? Can one indefinitely limit the number of regiments like that? Without looking at the important human problems?

[Monchal] I think that we are going to reach a threshold, a threshold beyond which it will be difficult to go, because first of all, the structure of the land forces cannot meet the government's targets. Furthermore, this is a threshold because the more we disband the regiments — and we already have disbanded some 60 regiments in the last five years — the more and more difficult it becomes.

[Cotta] You said that everybody is calm. General Jean-Claude Bertin, who is the director of the military staff of the land forces, has just written in a white paper, and I quote, that the land forces have never ceased, over the years, to endure successive reorganizations, and he adds, the military staff are increasingly sensitive to the prevalent general monotony. Thus these restructuring plans are frightening —

[Monchal, interrupting] I think that he is talking about a sensitivity to the prevalent general monotony, but this is not linked directly to this problem of restructuring. I think that General Bertin has made an excellent contribution from an extremely liberal study on the management of human resources, but the contacts I have with the different men, and I will have more this weekend, and that I had all last week, show that my analysis is entirely adapted to the situation.

[Cotta] The planned reduction of the cadres foresees that the armies will lay off 15,000 cadres, but that the land forces will be the most affected. Does it appear to you that it will be difficult to handle? How is one going to say to the army cadres. Okay, it is finished now, on to something new?

[Monchal] Well, first of all, there will be a relatively limited number — I hope that the law on programming will confirm this — of cadres who should leave the land forces in the next six years.

[Cotta] How many — 1,000, 1,500?

[Monchal] Approximately 8,000 cadres, 1,500 officers, and 6,500 non-commissioned officers. I think that we will be able to restrain them, first of all, within the defense sector, since the gendarmerie has to recruit a

few more cadres, and perhaps, in other forms of national service, through the debate taking place at the moment.

[Cotta] Is a second career envisaged for a certain number of officers? What would be needed for that?

[Monchal] This is nothing new. I think that often, and in particular, the non-commissioned officers are retrained and very well retrained to enter the civil sector. What is needed first of all is the recognition of their experience. They do not necessarily have any qualifications, but they have a wide experience in many domains.

[Cotta] How can one judge the experience of somebody?

[Monchal] Well, I think that it is necessary to endeavor to work with the member of staff, to see his effectiveness, and also, it is necessary that the national education and other state services recognize this experience even if this perhaps means resitting for particular qualifications or specific exams.

[Cotta] In this professional army, the army does not as such really need any more conscripts, apart from a small number, but how many are needed and with what qualifications?

[Monchal] First of all, over the next six years, the land forces will need conscripts during the so-called transition phase. Thereafter, I think we will need above all a professional army, and according to the results of the debate taking place at the moment, we will perhaps be able to integrate a small number of conscripts, into the framework of a reformed compulsory national service.

[Cotta] This restructuring creates problems within not only the army but also the communes and political staff who are in place. Laurent Fabius [leader of Socialist Party caucus in the National Assembly] fears, he says, a massive upheaval. Does the word upheaval seem to you shocking or excessive?

[Monchal] Listen, I cannot judge a politician. You understand this very well.

[Cotta] No, of course.

[Monchal] For me, I think that in each commune where a regiment will disappear, it is advisable to accept this change, and the delegation for restructuring, which was set up by the defense minister several years ago, provides a certain number of means to facilitate this change.

[Cotta] As regards means, the professional army will be expensive. Do you consider that you have sufficient financial means? There again, in figures, the deficit ...[pauses] that is to say, 50 billion francs, and that we

do not have enough money and that we are 50 billion short.

[Monchal] I think that we have to be very precise. Indeed, a professional army would be very expensive if we were to maintain the same level, and the same structure, but you know that the last vote on planning and the forthcoming one, there will be a cut in the cost of 20 billion. Thus, in fact, this professional army will cost the nation 20 billion less because the army will be smaller.

[Cotta] The last aspect concerns the change in the military service. Are you dreading that with the disappearance of the national service as it functions today, that the French youth will be removed from the problems of defense. Are the links between the French and the national defense essential on the scale of republican values?

[Monchal] Of course. The links between the French and the national defense is essential, and it is the role not only of the armies, who will continue to do it through the means that we would like them to provide to us, but also of the family, national education, and you, the media, to present us, in a positive way to the nation.

[Cotta] But you are still in favor of a reduced compulsory military service, open to 10 percent, not compulsory, but open to 10 percent of the population?

[Monchal] During this period of discussion, it is not our business to influence the political decision-makers in whatever it is. It is a question of giving evidence, and I will testify each time I am asked about the way young people behave in the national service in what we have been able to achieve with them, in particular, in former Yugoslavia, and in the way we will be able to employ them.

[Cotta] Thank you, General Monchal.

France: Air France 'Hit Jackpot' at U.S. Airline Talks

BR27031-3096 Paris LIBERATION in French
27 Mar 96 p 19

[Report signed "A.S.": "The Aviation Hatchet Buried"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The intuition of the French authorities was right on. The U.S.' battle cry in the form of its refusal to permit roughly 500 Air France flights was intended to increase the pressure before the summit that was held yesterday between the two countries' secretaries of state for transport. The summit was planned back in February, with an agenda that was respected in full: Launching discussions to negotiate a bilateral agreement in the air transport industry. The French are refusing to use the term "open skies."

preferring instead to talk of "an agreement that will enable the gradual liberalization of air links between the two countries." Once the principle of the bilateral agreement was established yesterday, the howl of anger suddenly died away again. The two countries agreed to bury the hatchet and go back on their decision to severely cut back their respective programs of air links for this summer. (passage omitted)

The United States, which at all costs wanted to avoid negotiations at the European level, can only rejoice at the result of yesterday's meeting. Even if a tremendous amount of work remains to be done. And the French, who wanted to gain some time before actually reaching an agreement, can also be happy. No specific schedule has yet been fixed. As a source close to the talks emphasized yesterday: "By the time a bilateral agreement between France and the United States sees the light of day, Air France will have had time to recover." For that is certainly the aim sought by the French: "To achieve a balanced agreement, which presupposes having access to the internal U.S. market enabling Air France to con-

clude commercial agreements with a U.S. airline," one source closely involved with the dossier said yesterday. Following American Airlines, it is now US Air that is in the running to form an alliance with Air France.

At the end of this six-day tug-of-war, the two parties seemed to be delighted. "We are satisfied with the agreement," Charles Hunnicutt, U.S. undersecretary of state for transport, said at the close of the meeting. His French counterpart, Anne-Marie Idrac, was also happy with the turn of events. "We have concluded a good agreement that will enable us to reconsider the immediate problems and reverse the disagreeable decisions made on both sides last week."

For Air France this is like hitting the jackpot. The French company will be able to increase its market share on the other side of the Atlantic by offering 21 percent more seats than it did last year. An increase that was not entirely unrelated to the U.S. battle cry of last week and which — if it actually takes place — presages further fits of rage yet to come on both sides of the Atlantic.

Italy: Agnelli Interviewed on Turin IGC
 BR2803111496 Milan IL / OGLJO in Italian
 28 Mar 96 p 1

[Unattributed report on interview with Italian Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli by unidentified correspondent in Rome; date not given: "Paris-Bonn Axis Good for Europe, Agnelli Says; Italy on the Waiting List"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Rome — We pointed out to Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli that the Turin conference is going to open in a odd climate. The French and the Germans have already reached agreement on the important issues, and three days before the conference was due to start, their economy ministers, Jean Arthuis and Theo Waigel, met in Laval to lay down how the hard core of economic and monetary will work and what its relations will be with those who remain outside it. "We could say that it is a stroke of luck that that happened, that the Franco-German axis is continuing to function... Look, France and Germany are the driving forces of European unity, indeed Europe was created as a result of the end of their historic hostility and rivalry; without them, there is no Europe. Of course nobody can force the European nations to agree to their basis for an accord on the important issues, albeit monetary union will not be being discussed in Turin..." In short, there is a directorate. "That is not true. If a directorate were to be set up, Europe would disappear; it would simply become a nonsense."

We asked Mrs. Agnelli, without beating about the bush, if Italy is inside or outside the real unification process, namely monetary union. We were given a two-edged answer: The political will is there, while a realistic stance suggests there is a hint of doubt. "We are doing our level best to be party to European unification as of the first stage, namely January 1999. Everybody, even German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, is talking of flexible integration. With the prospect of a Europe comprising 24 states — because at this juncture that is what we are talking about — it is clear that schedules for it will have to be adopted and institutional itineraries leading to it will have to be diversified. But it may just be that our attempt to join the first group, namely the founder countries which adopt the euro as their common currency, fails. In that case, I would suggest that it is preferable to have a Europe that is established and that works, possibly with a waiting list which we would be on, than to have no Europe at all. The same applies to the Schengen accord and to other countries as well. Unification will not take place in cohorts, and that might not be such a bad thing."

As of tomorrow you will be chairing a conference, one of whose principal aims is to extend the use of majority

voting and to cut back the powers of veto. Yet, in the bovine spongiform encephalopathy ["mad cow disease"] affair for instance, even veterinary surgeons have been voting according to their national colors. "Universal consensus is impossible. We must decide in what areas unanimity is necessary, for example security and certain common foreign policy decisions, and in what areas it can be avoided. The Italian EU presidency is not coming to the conference with preconceived ideas, but that is our orientation in principle."

Andreotti, Statesman on Trial for Mafia Crimes

People say that France has conducted a sort of shadow presidency of our six-month term, preempting every deadline with its own decisions. "No, that is not true. Our French friends may like the idea that people think they are acting behind the scenes of all the important decisions, but that really has not been the case." What about the amused, and sometimes downright sarcastic, comments in the European press? "Italian presidencies always elicit the sarcastic wit of others because that wit is to be found first and foremost in our own press. That is where the comedy starts." Was [former Foreign Minister] Antonio Martino, then, so off track when he foreshadowed the Euro-skeptic criticisms of Maastricht currently on everybody's lips? "Deputy Martino added a lot of his own suspicious and incredulous temperament to his Euro-skepticism. But what I see prevailing is not so much Euro-skepticism as Euro-boredom. All these things people repeat in liturgical fashion are always the same and end up boring people. Just think of the Italian election campaign. But in actual fact, skepticism is the prerogative of the integrated and the opulent. The countries pressing to join are Euro-enthusiasts."

According to Ambassador Sergio Romano, "Europe is not capable of presenting itself with a strong identity to renegotiate its relationship with the United States." "The ambassador is a man of rare intelligence and perception, but he is too harsh with Europe. In actual fact the Americans, too, have need of Europe in order to conduct the world leadership which is their due, and which is in our interest too." Your most attentive listener and highest-ranking interlocutor in the Senate is Giulio Andreotti, a statesman on trial for Mafia crimes... "Yes, he pointed out that in our country foreign policy tends to disappear around election time, and I replied that that is exactly the opposite of what happens in America. Andreotti's speeches are always very intelligent and right on target. Now there is a man who understands foreign policy like the back of his hand."

SPAIN: Westendorp Discusses EU Voting Structure
BR2803132096 Madrid EL PAIS in Spanish
28 Mar 96 p 6

[Interview with Acting Spanish Foreign Minister Carlos Westendorp by Ignacio Cembrero in Madrid; date not given: "Westendorp: 'More Account Must Be Taken of the Fact That We Are the Fifth Largest Country in Europe'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Carlos Westendorp, 58, and acting foreign minister, is one of the people who knows the most about the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) due to kick off in Turin tomorrow with the aim of reviewing the Treaty of Maastricht. For seven months he chaired the reflection group charged with preparing the work of the IGC. Here he explains what the Spanish objectives are.

[Cembrero] What is Spain looking for?

[Westendorp] We want to bring the EU up to date, paying heed to the concerns of tomorrow's citizens. We need to prepare the Union for the biggest enlargement of its history and increase its efficiency. We will push ahead with further integration and increase its democratic representation. That means that more account should be taken of the fact that we are the fifth largest state in the EU in terms of population.

[Cembrero] What does this mean for the European Commission?

[Westendorp] The best solution would be for there to be just 15 commissioners instead of the current 20, chosen by the president of the Commission at the proposal of the governments and taking into account the North-South geographical balance. We cannot accept there being just one Commissioner per country if each one only has one vote.

[Cembrero] What about the Council of Ministers?

[Westendorp] We need to improve the democratic representation. To do that we have to correct the excessive overrepresentation of the less-populated states by giving more votes to the more populated countries. These will be the most sensitive issues of negotiations because there is a dividing line between these two categories of countries.

[Cembrero] Would that also mean having to generalize the use of qualified majority voting?

[Westendorp] Yes, except for issues such as the enlargement to new members or the funding of the EU. We are

in favor of the majority vote even being used in areas such as the environment, as long as the costly decisions we are forced to make are funded by the EU.

[Cembrero] How would you improve the defective EU foreign policy?

[Westendorp] It needs to be given a face and a voice. The general secretary of the Council of Ministers should be a politician and not a senior civil servant and should be a man to embody and lead this policy in association with the foreign minister of the country that occupies the EU presidency and the president of the Commission. He should be able to rely on an expert analysis group.

[Cembrero] What is Spain looking for in terms of police and judicial cooperation?

[Westendorp] We want everything to develop in the same way as the principle of granting entry visas to the nationals of third countries. Whether or not a country is put on the list was decided unanimously before but now it is a majority decision. We also want to see a stop put to political asylum in one member state for the citizens of another member state who are accused of committing terrorist acts.

[Cembrero] What about employment?

[Westendorp] We know that that will continue to be a matter for each member state and the different economic operators, but we will insist on reaching increased coordination between the Fifteen to promote job creation through measures that would be enshrined in the new treaty. Moreover, the social protocol must be part of the new treaty.

[Cembrero] Is the United Kingdom the main obstacle for progress?

[Westendorp] It is the loudest proponent of the view of European construction that most of the European partners reject. According to London, Europe means intergovernmental cooperation and the perfecting of the single market. Fortunately, the United Kingdom is still following the path of the majority and, grosso modo, it agrees with the ideas I have outlined.

[Cembrero] Does the People's Party share your views?

[Westendorp] Yes. We have worked them out together in recent years, devising a consensual position through the Joint Congress- Senate Committee for European affairs. We remained in close contact and there was total agreement in light of the forthcoming Turin meeting.

Turkey: Demirel Interviewed on Ties on Eve of U.S. Visit*TA2703175896 Ankara TRT Television Network in Turkish 1800 GMT 26 Mar 96*

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Suleyman Demirel has said that under the changing world conditions, Turkish-U.S. relations have gained more importance than ever. On the eve of his visit to the United States, the president was interviewed by the magazine EKA INTERNATIONAL [published in Ankara]. Demirel said that Turkey is trying to extend its relations with the United States to all fields and that it does not favor keeping the ties limited to their strategic aspect.

Commenting on the economic and military aid the United States extends to Turkey, Demirel said the reduction in this aid resulting from outside intervention will not be in the interests of either country. He stressed that the reduction will not only hurt bilateral relations but will also prevent Turkey from fulfilling its responsibility as a source of stability in a region where peace is in danger.

Replying to a question on the solution of the Cyprus problem and on relations with Greece, the president pointed out that the unilateral initiatives Turkey repeatedly took in connection with the Cyprus problem have never yielded any results. He stressed that Turkey has always favored a result-oriented, constructive dialogue to solve its problems with Greece.

Demirel recalled that the U.S. Department of Commerce describes Turkey as one of the largest of the 10 up-and-coming commercial markets in the world. That is why, Demirel said, Turkish and U.S. firms can cooperate in many fields.

In his interview, Demirel stated that terrorism is a major threat facing the modern world. He said terrorist activities not only threaten the security and stability of countries but also lead to human rights violations. He stressed that the difference between human rights campaigns and blood-stained terrorist acts must be well understood. [passage omitted]

Turkey: Yilmaz's Views on Provide Comfort Detailed*NC2703155796 Ankara TURKISH DAILY NEWS in English 27 Mar 96**[Received via Internet]*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ANKARA — Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz said the Parliament will vote Thursday [28 March] on a new mandate extension for the Operation Provide Comfort (OPC), but ruled out continuing

stay for the Western planes protecting Iraqi Kurds under the existing status.

Yilmaz, who heads a center-right minority coalition between his Motherland Party (ANAP) and the True Path Party (DYP), said the new three-month term would enable his government to carry out the necessary changes in the status governing the OPC.

Under the OPC which dates to 1991, a U.S.-British-French air force comprising 48 warplanes and an array of support aircraft and helicopters patrol an air exclusion zone north of the 36th parallel to deter an Iraqi attack on Kurds administering their "safe haven" in the north.

Despite the agitation by opposition parties which blame the OPC for the "power vacuum" in northern Iraq facilitating entrenchment there of Turkey's own rebel Kurds, Turkish governments have pushed through past extensions without difficulty, arguing that the presence of the force allows Turkey to soften Western reaction to its incursions into Iraq in pursuit of the separatist rebels.

The Turkish and American officials are currently engaged in negotiations for a new format to the OPC that would address the concerns. These reportedly include more clearly defined "rules of engagement" to prevent skirmishes between the Western planes and Iraqi units which, in the past caused headaches for Turkey.

Despite the current efforts to improve the terms of the OPC and the military recommended new extensions without setting a time limit, the government this time needs the support of the opposition Democratic Left Party (DSP) for the new extension deemed vital by the United States and its European allies.

Although having promised to provide indirect support to the coalition by blocking no-confidence votes, DSP leader Bulent Ecevit recently made his support to the OPC extension conditional on guarantees that it would not harm Turkey's security, and the interests of the Turks in northern Iraq would also be safeguarded. Ecevit, openly suspecting the United States of trying to set up an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq, also sought guarantees that the OPC would not undermine Iraq's territorial unity.

Addressing his party's deputies, Yilmaz said the (military dominated advisory body) National Security Council had left the duration of the new mandate to the government, adding that his government would explain to the United States and other allies the impossibility of keeping the OPC under its present status.

Noting that the OPC was first launched for the self repatriation of about a million Iraqi Kurds who fled to Iran and Turkey after their failed uprising in 1991 and

later to provide security for those who returned. Yilmaz said over the five years that passed since then every extension was supposedly made for the "last time."

The prime minister said it was not possible to say from now for how long the OPC would be needed, but it was definite that it will not stay under the same status which has given rise to worries concerning Turkey's own security.

Yilmaz said the opponents of the OPC focused mainly on the "void of authority" it is said to have created (by curtailing Baghdad's sovereignty in the area) and the umbrella the Western planes allegedly provided for activities which may in time disrupt the territorial integrity of Iraq.

But on the other hand, Yilmaz argued that putting an immediate end to the mandate of the OPC would amount to an hostile act towards Turkey's allies. He said, therefore, the government was seeking to be given a "reasonable time" to permit a smooth phase-out.

He said by limiting the last extension to three months, Turkey had given the message to its allies that it needed some additional guarantees.

So, the government will request on Thursday another three months which it will make use of to carry out comprehensive improvements.

These, he said will cover enhanced Turkish control on the operations of the Western force, plus some arrangements that will eliminate the Turkish worries regarding Iraq's territorial unity.

"We shall explain all our worries to our allies, starting with the United States, in plain terms. We shall tell them that it is not possible for this government to push through the extension by itself."

Meanwhile, pro-Islamic Welfare Party (RP) made clear that it will keep agitating against the presence of the Western force.

Addressing the RP deputies who make up the strongest faction in the 550-seat parliament, veteran Islamist Necmettin Erbakan charged that the main objectives of the OPC was to serve the U.S. interests, to turn Muslims against fellow Muslims and create tensions in the region.

He said no independent country could accept the presence of a foreign military force on its soil.

Erbakan said in contrast to the consistency of RP's opposition to the Provide Comfort, other parties which opposed the extension of its mandate in the past were now championing its extension.

Erbakan also accused Ecevit of contributing to the dismemberment of Iran [as published] while professing care for its unity.

Turkey: Oymen's Talks With Moscow Described
NC2703171996 Ankara *TURKISH DAILY NEWS*
in English 27 Mar 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ANKARA — Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Onur Oymen, on completing official talks in Moscow with senior Russian officials, predicted on Tuesday [26 March] the beginning of a new "era in ties" between the two countries.

"We were met with very close understanding. We also found the opportunity to clear up some speculation that had previously come out in the press. A new era in our ties is beginning," Oymen said.

Oymen held seven hours of talks on Monday with Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov during which, official sources say, the whole range of issues concerning bilateral Turco-Russian ties were taken up in a "frank and open manner." The ANATOLIA NEWS AGENCY quoted Oymen on Tuesday telling Turkish reporters during a briefing on his talks with Russian officials that they had also seen at first hand that means exist to also settle the outstanding problems between the two countries.

Oymen said that there would be increased diplomatic traffic between Turkey and Russia in the coming period and indicated that the Russian side had accepted Turkish Foreign Minister Emre Gonensay's invitation to Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov to visit Turkey.

He said that the Russian foreign minister would be visiting Turkey in April or May and added that Gonensay would be visiting Moscow, although the date for this is still to be set.

Oymen also indicated that the long-awaited visit by President Boris Yeltsin to Turkey would have to wait at least until after the elections in Russia planned for June.

He also announced that First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets would be visiting Turkey in the shortest possible time to attend the meetings of the Turkish-Russian mixed Economic Committee.

According to information provided by Oymen the Turkish and Russian sides also agreed that the undersecretaries of the two countries should meet twice a year to exchange ideas on bilateral and regional issues of concern to Ankara and Moscow.

The sides also agreed to have meeting between technicians from the two countries on the Middle East peace

process, and cooperation against organized crime, terrorism, and drug smuggling.

Oymen went on to say that they had received very positive signals from the Russian side on the question of preventing the activities of the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) in Russia.

He said he had received assurances from Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov that they were trying hard to prevent the activities of the PKK, which is outlawed in Turkey.

"There is a working group set up within the framework of the Sharm al-Shaykh process and it is going to meet in Washington soon. Turkey and Russia will cooperate during these meetings.

"The relevant officials from the two foreign ministries dealing with illegal activities will also meet soon to discuss joint actions against terrorism," Oymen said.

Oymen also disclosed that the Russian side had prevented a radio station that the PKK was trying to set up on Russian soil.

Asked if he believed the Russian's were sincere in these promises, Oymen said that keeping promises was the basis of good will in bilateral relations between nations.

"We predict that they will keep their words and are expecting them to," Oymen said.

He went on to indicate that the Russian side was satisfied with Turkey's position on the Chechen crisis but still mentioned the concern that Moscow felt because of individual actions in Turkey in connection with this crisis.

Oymen said he had also underlined in his talks with his Russian colleagues that Turkey also stood opposed to actions such as the hijacking of ferry boats, and raiding of hospitals which the Chechen rebels have done recently.

Touching on the subject of pipelines to carry Caspian oil to world markets, Oymen said there was much speculation in the press on this subject and added that doubts resulting from such speculation had been cleared up during his talks with Ivanov.

"Russia in a very open manner told us this: 'We do not desire to see one country hold the monopoly over the whole of the oil in Central Asia and the Caucasus or over the pipelines involved. Of course all of this will be done by means of multilateral pipeline projects. We do not object to one of these pipelines running from Baku to Ceyhan (on Turkey's Mediterranean coast). In fact we are even prepared to cooperate with Turkey in this regard,'" Oymen said.

He added that Russia also understood the mounting concern in Turkey over the increased risk to the environment that would attend the increased tanker traffic going through the Turkish Straits as Caspian oil is transported to world markets.

But, he said, the Russian side did not bring up the issue of Turkey's tightening of security regulations for ships going through the straits — an issue over which Moscow has voiced displeasure in the past.

He added that the two sides had also arrived at an agreement in principle that Turkmenistan natural gas should be transported to Turkey over Russia and Georgia.

Providing information on other agreements the two countries have arrived at, Oymen said that Turkey would, over a 15-year period, buy hard coal from Russia valued at \$500 million.

The sides also agreed that there were possibilities for the two countries to cooperate in areas such as the reconstruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and joint projects in Central Asia, China and other Far Eastern countries. They agreed to encourage private companies from the two countries in this context.

Russia also removed the obstacles it had placed on Turkish Airlines flights from Istanbul to Osaka in Japan which will represent a five hour shortening of the route between these two points and also create the possibility of direct flights to Beijing.

The Russian also informed the Turkish side that it was planning on bringing an exemption from visas on diplomatic passports and on relaxing visa requirements for businessmen.

Turkey: Foreign Ministry 'Cautious' on Mideast Alliance

*TA2703170796 Ankara ANATOLIA in English
1545 GMT 27 Mar 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ankara, March 27 (A.A.) — Ankara on Wednesday said it was against any kind of formation which will lead to the formation of groups.

Foreign Ministry deputy spokesman Nurettin Nurkan recalled that news reports appeared early this year saying efforts were underway to form a strategic alliance between Israel, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan and the United States. "Our ministry had made a statement at the time saying that Ankara had not received such a proposal and stressed that Ankara so far was cautious about the formation of any kinds of groups in the region."

Nurkan said President Suleyman Demirel had to respond to a similar question last week during his visit to Egypt.

adding Demirel had told them that Turkey opposed these formations in the region and stressed that such formations may damage the peace process to which Turkey strongly extends its support.

Turkey: Officials on EU, Greek Positions on Yilmaz Offer

NC2703154096 Ankara *TURKISH DAILY NEWS*
in English 27 Mar 96

[Report by Nazlan Ertan — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] ANKARA — Despite Athens' determined veto that prevented the Turco-European Union Association Council meeting, Ankara clung to its olive branch, insisting that the prime minister's offer of "unconditional dialogue" was still on the agenda.

"Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz's offer was not a move to lift the Greek veto before the Association Council. This is an important offer which opens a new front to Turkey and we hope that Greece will accept it after deliberation," Foreign Ministry deputy spokesman Nurettin Nurkan told the *TURKISH DAILY NEWS* (TDN) after the postponement of the Association Council.

Ankara, although blaming the postponement on Greece, said that the European Union must be aware that any failure to carry out obligations by the European Union was "an attitude that had legal consequences." In a statement released on Tuesday (26 March), Ankara reminded the European Union that the delay of contractual obligations related to the customs union due to "third factors" outside the scope of the customs union was unacceptable and would lead Turkey to reassess its own obligations toward the EU.

The statement said that Ankara had received a telephone call from Italian Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli, who said that the "Fourteen" firmly supported Turkey's "comprehensive peace initiative to Greece." [passage omitted]

On Monday, Ankara withheld comment on the Greek reaction to the Turkish offer until its ambassador to Greece, Umit Pamir, met with the Greek prime minister, Konstandinos Simitis. The early negative reaction of Dhimitrios Reppas, a Greek government spokesman, was brushed aside by Ankara as "not a deliberated response," although Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz admitted that the "Greek side did not come up with the positive response Turkey expected." Ambassador Pamir met with Simitis on Tuesday morning, delivering him Yilmaz's offer of "unconditional dialogue and a comprehensive peace process" which did not rule out going to

the International Court of Justice if dialogue and third party mediation failed.

Pamir, coming out of the one-hour meeting, said that he had explained to Simitis the developments that led to Yilmaz's declaration, as well as the new prime minister's policies and new approach towards the bilateral relations.

While Simitis' response is not known, Greek diplomatic sources in Ankara indicate that the Greek government will need time to assess the offer fully.

The European Union also appeared willing to "give both countries time" in its decision to postpone the Association Council meeting, which was scheduled for March 26, but was cancelled late on Monday night, after hours of telephone diplomacy.

"The problem stems from Turco-Greek problems," Italian Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli said. "We hope they will solve their problems quickly." Declaring the "positive impact" of Yilmaz's statements, Agnelli nevertheless, said that the Greek side must be given time to assess the offer.

She also admitted that there had been "discussions" among Greece and its European Union partners but carefully refrained from calling them "problems."

Behind the Curtain

According to Turkish diplomats, Greece's insistent veto has caused Greece to be isolated, particularly when the "Fourteen" had already agreed upon a draft that was presented to Turkey during the three hours of "flowing drafts" between Ankara and Brussels.

The draft, which Ankara accepted around 10 p.m. on Monday night, was vetoed by Greece because the draft welcomed Yilmaz's weekend declaration. The draft said that Yilmaz's words "set out a number of principles for the improvement of relations" between the two countries.

The draft said that if Yilmaz's statements could be implemented, it would open a new chapter in Turco-Greek relations.

While the draft made a reference in respect to territorial integrity, it fell short of meeting Greece's demand that "Greek territory is also the territory of Europe." The draft's reference to the International Court of Justice also fell short of Greek demands. It urged both sides to decide upon "appropriate measures" and to identify them with respect to international law, including the option of going to the International Court of Justice or seeking third-party mediation, if both sides agreed to it.

When Greece blocked the draft, the others debated whether to pass it as a declaration of the "Fourteen", but Greece argued that the "Fourteen Plus One" formula could not be valid because this was an issue of vital national interest to Greece.

While the "Fourteen" kept pressing Greece for the removal of its veto, an atmosphere of optimism was seen in Ankara — as opposed to the earlier pessimism seen around 6 p.m. — the very same moment Turkish political and diplomatic circles attended the Greek National Day Celebrations. Around 9 p.m., a senior prime ministerial aide said, "Everything is fine, the meeting will take place." Two hours later, it was announced that the meeting was postponed.

Despite the postponement of the meeting, Ankara still claims that Turkey had come out of the whole case with substantial gains, particularly after a statement by term-presidency Italy that "Turks and Greeks should solve their problems in a platform independent of the customs union." A French Foreign Ministry spokesman made a similar declaration in Paris, saying that the European Union, as Fifteen, had already agreed upon the customs union agreement with Turkey.

"Financial cooperation is also agreed upon and has to be respected by the Fifteen," he said.

The spokesman acknowledged that there were "some Turco-Greek conflicting points" but this was a separate question from the customs union.

"The method to solve them is another question. Those differences may be solved between Turkey and Greece, and the method to solve this difference is dialogue between Greece and Turkey, which might be facilitated by the European Union," he said.

Turkey: Gonensay's Messages to Neighbors Reported

NC2703203096 *Istanbul HURRIYET in Turkish*
23 Mar 96 p 18

[Report by Muharrem Sarikaya: "Message to Four Neighbors"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Emre Gonensay has conveyed important messages to four of Turkey's neighbors. He informed Russia that he will make an effort to promote relations between the two countries to a very high level. He informed Greece that he hopes it will respond to Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz's favorable message.

Emre Gonensay has said that "Turkey has been dissatisfied with Syria." Regarding Iran, he asserted that relations between the two countries are normal.

Gonensay has replied to HURRIYET's questions. Asked to comment on Turkey's relations with Russia, which has hinted that it will "support the Workers Party of Kurdistan" if Ankara supports Dzhokhar Dudayev in Chechnya, he said: "We have always wanted to promote Turkey's economic and political relations with Russia to a very high level. We want to improve cooperation between the two countries. It is very important for us and we have mentioned it in the past. We also have tried to promote our relations."

Gonensay asserted that Foreign Ministry Under Secretary Onur Oymen will visit Moscow to remove the chill the Chechnya problem has created between Turkey and Russia. He said that he held talks with Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov at the Sharm al-Shaykh summit in Egypt and noted that Primakov invited him to visit Moscow.

Emre Gonensay said that he will visit Moscow shortly after Onur Oymen's visit. Stressing that Turkey's approach to the problem in Chechnya is quite clear, he asserted that Ankara wants a peaceful solution to be found.

Gonensay's messages to the other three neighbors were as follows:

1. Syria: The amount of water Turkey allows to flow into Syria is more than Syria needs. We are dissatisfied with Syria's approach on terrorism. Syria moving to withdraw the support it gives to the terrorist organization is very important. Damascus must create an atmosphere of confidence in its relations with Turkey.

2. Greece: We want the dialogue between the two countries to be resumed in an atmosphere of mutual confidence. Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz has called for a dialogue on the establishment of peace. He has created an opportunity for talks between the two sides. I am confident that the Greek Government will respond to his message and that a dialogue will be established to resolve the existing problems.

3. Iran: The file on the assassinations has not yet been conveyed to the Foreign Ministry. The matter has been transferred to the judicial organs. We are waiting for the file and for the claims to be clarified.

Turkey: RP Criticizes 'Anti-Religious' Measures in Army

NC2703232696 *Istanbul TURKIYE in Turkish*
24 Mar 96 p 15

[Report by Senol Ates]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ankara — RP (Welfare Party) Diyarbakir deputy Yakup Hatipoglu asked Interior

Minister Ulku Guney if prayers are allowed at the chapels in the army barracks, if the high ranking officers are permitted to say prayers in the barracks, and if there are orders to pull down the minarets of the barrack chapels.

RP's Hatipoglu submitted a motion to the parliament presidency requesting Guney to give an oral reply to these questions. In his motion Hatipoglu said: "According to a front page newspaper report on 18 March 1996, the former Interior Minister Teoman Unusan issued a circular to the Gendarmerie units on 15 February 1996 ordering the pulling down of the minarets constructed with government money from discarded barrels welded together. The circular also prohibits the ranking personnel from attending prayers at the chapels in the military installations. The circular also states that henceforth prayers will not be said in barracks' chapels, the voice devices will be removed, and the imams from the Religious Affairs Directorate will not wear their official robes and turbans and instead will use the khaki color special imam robes as specified in Armed Forces regulations. Is this information correct? Does this situation not contradict the freedom of religion and conscience found in our constitution? From time to time, it is being reported that the cadets in the naval, air, and land forces are being expelled from the army if found praying or living according to religious and moral precepts. Are all these correct?"

Tough talk from Asilturk

Indicating that people have the right to live according to their beliefs, the RP secretary general Oguzhan Asilturk asserted that the pressure on the believers has increased since the new government has come to power.

Claiming that recently the female students from the religious institutions were not allowed to take school entrance exams because they were wearing headdresses, Asilturk argued that a campaign of enmity against religion is being conducted under the pretext of secularism.

Claiming that following a circular issued by General Teoman Koman, the commander of the Gendarmerie Force, "a campaign of enmity against religion is being conducted in the military institutions under the pretext of secularism," Asilturk said: "The army is the crucible of the Prophet. You cannot both prohibit the soldier's faith and then order him to die for the fatherland. This is not possible. It will bring no benefit to those who are engaged in or who promote enmity against religion."

Turkey: Defense Reacts to Interior's Remarks on Army

TA2603141496 Ankara TRT Television Network
in Turkish 1800 GMT 25 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] National Defense Minister Oltan Sungurlu has said that the remarks in an Interior Ministry directive concerning the Turkish Army are out of line and disturbing. He added: The remarks concerning the Turkish Army and its commanders are not true. The whole army, including all levels of command, share our beliefs. Sungurlu visited soldiers who were wounded during the fight against terrorism in southeast Anatolia and who were being treated at the Gulhane Military Faculty of Medicine.

In reply to a question on his assessments of criticism leveled against the army and the directive issued by the Interior Ministry, Sungurlu said that these statements regarding the army and its commanders exceed permissible limits.

[Begin Sungurlu recording] These are very disturbing and out-of-line remarks. The Turkish Army, which is the apple of the nation's eye, safeguards the values of this nation. These remarks concerning the Turkish Army and its commanders are not true. In the short time I have occupied this post, I have observed that all our beliefs are shared by the Turkish Army, and that includes all levels of command. Speaking ill of the army by using inappropriate language and leveling wrong accusations against it are different from criticizing certain arrangements in the army. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Turkey: Military Says Armed Forces 'Not Anti-Religious'

TA2603173296 Ankara TRT Television Network
in Turkish 1600 GMT 26 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] It was reported that the Turkish Armed Forces are not anti-religious as certain circles deliberately claim, and that those longing for shari'ah — afraid that their real faces will be revealed — as well as falsely religious people and reactionaries who are behind the times are siding against this institution in a bid to undermine it.

A high-level military official, who replied to an ANATOLIA reporter's questions on the directive issued by the Gendarmerie Central Command regarding worship at military installations, said that certain circles are trying to undermine the Turkish Armed Forces by disseminating fictitious and distorted statements and declarations. The military official, who described this as unfortunate agitation, said the following: The Turkish Armed Forces constitute a system of disciplines, orders, and

principles. This system is based on fundamental measures such as science, realism, openness, reason, and honesty, and it has to abide by them in order to fulfill the supreme duty assigned to it by our lofty nation.

The Turkish Armed Forces are not anti-religious as certain circles deliberately claim. On the contrary, the Turkish Armed Forces, which are faithful to secular and

democratic principles, respect everybody's faith, creed, and practice of worship regardless of where it comes from and who practices it, and safeguards them within its institutions. For this reason, it is only natural for these fake religious people, who aspire to gain and who even got rich by exploiting the lofty feelings of our people, to speak ill of the Turkish Armed Forces.

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